border at Sitamarhi (Bihar) on September 19 last; if so, from where the uranium was stolen; who is responsible for the security arrangements there and also the persons said to be involved;

(b) the number of cases of uranium theft (in various forms) have come to notice as yet, the countries where the stuff is supposed to have been taken to, the number of operating gangs, how much worth of uranium has been lost as yet, thus;

(c) the number of prosecutions launched in such cases and against how many persons with details there of;

(d) what is the number which have been sentenced to jail; and

(e) measures taken to strengthen the security and to severely punish the guilty?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENTS OF OCEAN DEVELOPMENT, ATOMIC ENERGY, ELECTRONICS AND SPACE (SHRI K. R. NARAYANAN): (a) Yes, Sir. However, it has not been established that what was seized from the businessman was actually uranium.

(b) to (e) Necesary information is being collected from the Excise Department of the Bihar Government.

Disappearance of an engineer of Tara-pur Atomic Plant

1548. SHRI A. G. KULKARNI: SHRI RAM AWADESH SINGH;

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state;

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the newsitem which appeared in the Times of India dated the 4th October, 1988 and state whether Mr. A. V. Patil has been done away with by persons who are alleged to be interested in misappropriation and thefts in Tarapur Atomic Power Station; and

(to) if so, whether any enquiries-have been undertaken and what is the truth in these allegations and how such security of sensitive area is being protected?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENTS OF OCEAN DEVELOPMENT, ATOMIC ENERGY, AND ELECTRONICS AND SPACE (SHRI K. R. NARAYANAN): (a) and (b) Shri A. V. Patil, who was working in Tarapur Atomic Power Station as Scientific Assistant from 10-4-1987, left the plant site on 7-9-1987 with the permission of his superiors. A complaint that he was missing was duly lodged with the police authorities. The facts were also communicated to the Missing Persons Bureau, Bombay and were also telecast on Bombay Doordarshan. There is no evidence that Shri Patil was done away with by some persons.

Launching of ISRO

1549. SHRI VIRENDRA VERMA: SHRI A. G. KULKARNI:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state;

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the newsitem which appeared in the Sunday Observer dated the 17th July to 23rd July, 1988 under the caption 'The Warning ISRO ignored' and if so, what are the facts in this connection; and

(b) whether it is a fact that launching of the vehicle failed because-of adverse gravitational pull in that area?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENTS OF OCEAN DEVELOPMENT, ATOMIC ENERGY, AND ELECTRONICS